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SLO Business Leaders Urge No Vote on Prop. 23 To Save Central Coast Jobs

SAN LUIS OBISPO— Proposition 23 would result in hundreds of job losses for the Central Coast’s flourishing clean energy economy, San Luis Obispo business leaders said Thursday, urging voters to defeat the oil industry backed ballot measure.

“Business leaders recognize that Prop. 23 is a job killer,” said Erik Justesen, CEO and President of RRM Design Group and incoming San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce Board Director. “California’s leadership in clean energy is creating billions of dollars in economic opportunities and hundreds of thousands of jobs, including hundreds of jobs in the San Luis Obispo area.”

The San Luis Obispo Chamber is joining the more than 420 individual businesses, chambers of commerce, and business trade associations that formally oppose Proposition 23. The ballot measure aims to undo California’s landmark clean energy law and threatens the state’s clean energy sector, one of the few growing areas of the economy. California is home to 12,000 clean energy businesses and 500,000 clean energy jobs.

Michael Toke, CEO of Cannon Power Group, said his company, which develops wind and other renewable energy projects around the world, decided in 2008 to return its headquarters to California from Spain.

“We made the decision to move back to California in large part due to the passage of the state’s clean energy law. We knew that this law would create economic opportunities for our company to grow and expand in the state,” Toke said. “Prop. 23 will reverse the state’s clean energy policies, and will harm companies like ours who are planning on growing jobs and investments in this state.”

Angiolo Laviziano, CEO of REC Solar, said his firm grew from a one-room office to a firm that employs 600 people and has a presence in nearly every solar market in the nation.

“We are standing today in the epicenter of the clean energy economy,” Laviziano said. “Companies like ours have installed hundreds of megawatts of clean, powerful solar energy,

with thousands more to come. These systems don't just pump kilowatt-hours into the grid - they create jobs in fields including finance, sales, engineering, and construction. They allow companies like ours to create wealth, opportunity, and new industries in an otherwise lagging economy."

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